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**NIDA Offers Psychiatrists a Look at State-of-the-Science
on Addiction and Mental Illnesses.**

Addiction is Key Topic at American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting

The Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), today challenged psychiatrists to learn more about the importance of substance abuse as a factor in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. At the American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting, Dr. Nora Volkow spoke at a special three-day NIDA-sponsored research program track, *"The Science of Addiction: Translating New Insights Into Better Psychiatric Practice."* Today's program included a look at the interplay between genes and the environment; and closed with a discussion of the challenges of addiction and co-occurring mental illnesses.

Dr. Volkow, an internationally known research psychiatrist, led a session entitled *Substance Abuse in Your Patients: Beyond What is Taught in Your Residency*. She urged psychiatrists to learn more about the link between substance abuse and mental illness. "Research has shown us that addiction is a disease that can be successfully treated, but not if the problems go undiagnosed," said Dr. Volkow. "By looking at what we now know about the neurobiological underpinnings of addiction, we are developing new, more effective addiction treatments."

Participants also heard from Alan I. Leshner, Ph.D., CEO, American Association for the Advancement of Science and former NIDA Director who gave a lecture on "The Evolving Climate for Neuroscience and Society."

Another focus at today's NIDA program track was a look at the parallels between obesity and addiction, two compulsive behaviors that science is showing have several unexpected commonalities.

Another afternoon session explored the question about addiction and co-occurring mental illnesses. Participants learned about the critical time periods in the life course when the connection between mood and anxiety disorders are most strongly linked to drug problems, as well as the importance of early intervention.

"As many as 6 in 10 people who have an illicit drug use disorder also suffer from mental illnesses," said Dr. Volkow. "Diagnosis of a mental disorder must be recognized as a sign of increased risk for subsequent substance abuse. Similarly, diagnosis of a substance use disorder must be recognized as a sign of increased risk for mental disorder, even if no mental disorder is evident at the time of diagnosis."

On Tuesday, Dr. Volkow will speak about *The Neurobiology of Free Will Gone Awry*, an in-depth look at the science of addiction and its implications for prevention and treatment. Also on Tuesday, participants will learn more about treatments for methamphetamine addiction.

On Wednesday, the NIDA program track will focus on neuroimaging research and its implications for the treatment of substance abuse, promising medications for the treatment of cocaine addiction, the importance of treating drug abusing offenders in the criminal justice system, the development of the adolescent brain and implications of drug use; and how prenatal nicotine exposure can lead to developmental vulnerabilities.

The full agenda for the NIDA program track can be found on the NIDA Web site at www.drugabuse.gov

The NIDA booth at APA will feature the Institute's new publication, "The Science of Addiction." This booklet covers the reasons people take drugs, why some people become addicted while others do not, how drugs work in the brain, and how addiction can be treated. A PDF copy of "The Science of Addiction" can be downloaded at the NIDA website: <http://www.drugabuse.gov>

The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at www.drugabuse.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — *The Nation's Medical Research Agency* — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and

translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.